Montana Wildlife & Transportation Partnership

Planning Tool Description

The Montana Wildlife & Transportation Partnership Planning Tool (MWTP PT or Planning Tool) is a statewide resource for evaluating highway segments of interest for wildlife accommodations based on wildlife-vehicle conflicts and important areas for wildlife movement and conservation. In addition, the MWTP PT identifies areas with a need for further data collection and research efforts to fill information gaps. The Planning Tool provides coarse scale information to assist stakeholders and the interested public in working collaboratively to identify potential conservation efforts on and adjacent to transportation corridors across Montana.

The Planning Tool was developed by a team of biologists, road ecologists, engineers, and GIS specialists from the partner entities of Montana Department of Transportation, Montana Fish, Wildlife & Parks, and Montanans for Safe Wildlife Passage. The team compiled, weighted, and ranked a variety of data sources representing five needs assessment criteria: 1) Risk to human safety and property damage resulting from wildlife-vehicle conflict; 2) Important daily and seasonal habitats for big game and carnivores; 3) Important habitats for struggling or at-risk species; 4) Important habitats for a wide range of species; and 5) Highway and adjacent linear infrastructure that may impede wildlife movement.

This broad-scale assessment is not intended to identify specific wildlife accommodation project locations or scopes. Rather, the MWTP PT is intended to assist the user in identifying relative areas of need on which to focus limited resources for further analysis and the development of project-level recommendations. Stakeholders and the interested public will need to form partnerships to complete fine-scale assessments within areas of interest to identify potential wildlife accommodation project needs and determine specific project locations. In short, the MWTP PT can be used to coarsely identify state-maintained highway segments for developing additional analysis with fine scale data and other sources of information. In some locations in Montana, finer-scale assessments already exist or are underway.

The Montana Wildlife & Transportation Partnership Steering Committee will use a standardized approach to evaluate and select project proposals for implementation of stand-alone wildlife accommodation projects. The statewide project selection process will integrate information from the MWTP PT with other evaluation criteria and considerations (e.g., community support, surrounding land use, engineering feasibility) to rate project proposals. Please visit https://www.mdt.mt.gov/pubinvolve/mwt/ for more information on the work of the Montana Wildlife & Transportation Partnership. Thank you for using the Montana Wildlife & Transportation Partnership Planning Tool to inform your interest in addressing wildlife and transportation challenges in Montana.